

CALIFORNIA OCCUPATIONAL GUIDES

EDITORS



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INTEREST AREA
ARTISTIC



WHAT DOES AN EDITOR DO?

Effective communication is the goal of the newspaper, magazine, book publishing, and radio and television industries. EDITORS work with writers to make sure what is published or broadcast is accurate, interesting, and easy to understand. They may work in virtually any industry, but are concentrated in the publishing and printing industries, as well as radio and television broadcasting.

There are several types of Editors. Some of these include:

Copy Editors examine written material for accuracy in content, grammar, and style. An Editor would typically check news stories, tables, captions, and columns. Although they are primarily employed by the newspaper and magazine industry, Copy Editors also work in radio and television

broadcasting, where they may help write and check copy that will be read on air by a reporter or news anchor. Book publishing, advertising, public relations, and motion picture services are other industries where they work. Copy Editors perform the following tasks:

- Check sentences and phrases for spelling, grammatical correctness, and precise word usage; if errors are found, they correct them.
- Verify the accuracy of dates and factual material with the reporter or book author, the company's library, public records, knowledgeable individuals, or a reputable source on the Internet.
- Edit news copy in addition to their other duties.
- Select and/or attach photographs or illustrations to the finished copy if necessary.
- Evaluate the news value of articles and features. If a story is too long, it must be shortened while retaining its meaning.
- Rewrite portions of the story or article to make it more interesting and readable.
- Write headlines in the proper size and spacing, keeping with the style of the newspaper.
- Carefully examine the final printed copy to ensure that it is error-free.
- Help design newspaper sections or Internet sites, supervise reporters or other Editors, and fill in for other employees as needed, especially in smaller organizations.

Management Editors, such as Sports, Feature, Lifestyle, and Managing Editors generally work in newspaper or magazine publishing. Management Editors perform the following tasks:

- Supervise other Editors or reporters.
- Make sure deadlines are met.



- Assign news stories to reporters and help develop news or other stories.
- Work with photographers to select photographs for publication.
- Coach staff and act as a liaison with other departments.
- Work with design staff to help plan the layout and 'look' of different sections.
- Work alone on small newspapers or magazines or be in charge of an entire department in larger operations.
- Work closely with reporters, writers, and higher-level management personnel.

Book and Acquisition Editors acquire, develop, and publish books. These workers may also be known as Production Managing Editors or Commissioning Editors. Book and Acquisition Editors perform the following tasks:

- Review and evaluate manuscripts of fiction and non-fiction books, poems, educational texts, and other books.
- Supervise manuscript presentation to publisher, advise publisher of the potential of the material, and help negotiate publishing contract.
- Have overall responsibility for the entire publishing process from manuscript review to actual printing.
- Recruit authors with a known reputation to write on a subject chosen by the Editor or publisher.
- Work with authors to make necessary changes to manuscripts in content, style, length, etc.
- Negotiate with authors concerning the details of publication such as royalties, publication dates, and size of the production run.
- Coordinate interactions between authors, illustrators, and designers, outside suppliers, and production staff.
- Meet deadlines and budgetary restrictions.
- Handle multiple projects at different levels of development simultaneously.
- Develop and maintain agreed budgets.
- Work with artists, art Editors, and design professionals on the content and layout of the book.

- Review proofs for editing and other corrections.

Other Editors in the book publishing industry include Developmental Editors, who works with authors on material not yet ready for publishing, and Technical Editors, who specialize in technical material.

Radio and Television Assignment Editors

coordinate the activities of reporters and videographers (television only). Radio and Television Assignment Editors perform the following tasks:

- Keep abreast of breaking local news, sometimes using a radio tuned to police and fire frequencies.
- Make the decision whether to send a reporter or a team of reporters into the field to broadcast live on a delayed basis.
- Keep track of the reporters in the field.
- Review video feed that comes via satellite link and decide whether to use this material in a story.

Internet Editors perform the following tasks:

- Review material for grammar, style, spelling, and clarity prior to posting on a Web site.
- Write articles, features, reviews, opinion pieces, and other content for the Web site.
- Work closely with writers, other editors, product developers, Web designers, programmers and others.
- Program news copy into languages such as hypertext markup language (HTML).

These Editors may also be known as Online or Content Editor.

Large metropolitan daily newspapers or network television news departments may have several Editors. Radio and television stations generally do not employ large editorial staffs. Other employers may have one or several Editors depending upon the size of the firm and the amount of written material generated.

Film editing is covered in a different Occupational Guide.

WHAT SKILLS ARE IMPORTANT?

Editors must have an above-average knowledge of grammar, sentence structure, and spelling, and must be well versed in how to make sometimes technical or dry reporting into a form that readers or listeners will find interesting and informative.

Important skills, knowledge, and abilities for Editors include:

- Writing – Communicating effectively in writing as appropriate for the needs of the audience.
- Reading Comprehension – Understanding written sentences and paragraphs in work-related documents.
- Critical Thinking – Using logic and reasoning to identify the strengths and weaknesses of alternative solutions, conclusions or approaches to problems.
- Coordination – Adjusting actions in relation to others' actions.
- Information Ordering – The ability to arrange things or actions in a certain order or pattern according to a specific rule or set of rules (e.g., patterns of numbers, letters, words, pictures, mathematical operations).
- English Language – Knowledge of the structure and content of the English language including the meaning and spelling of words, rules of composition, and grammar.
- Communications and Media – Knowledge of media production, communication, and dissemination techniques and methods. This includes alternative ways to inform and entertain via written, oral, and visual media.
- Deductive Reasoning – The ability to apply general rules to specific problems to produce answers that make sense.
- Written Comprehension – The ability to read and understand information and ideas presented in writing.
- Monitoring – Monitoring/Assessing performance of yourself, other individuals, or organizations to make improvements or take corrective action.
- Speaking – Talking to others to convey information effectively.

WHAT'S THE WORK ENVIRONMENT?

Companies employing Editors can range in size from one-person shops to international corporations employing thousands of workers. The great variety of employer size means that working conditions can vary widely, too.

Editors generally work in an office setting that is well lit, air conditioned, and comfortable. They may sit close to the reporters they edit.

The physical demands of the job are not difficult. Editors must read and correct work quickly and accurately. They work under pressure to meet deadlines.

Union Membership

Editors working for newspapers may be required to join the Newspaper Guild. Electronic broadcast media such as Radio or Television Editors may be members of the Communication Workers of America or the National Association of Broadcast Employees and Technicians, part of the Communication Workers of America.

WHAT'S THE CALIFORNIA JOB OUTLOOK?

The following information is from the occupational projections produced by the Employment Development Department (EDD) Labor Market Information Division (LMID) and represents the broad occupational group Writers and Editors, which includes Editors:

Estimated number of workers in 2000:	14,200
Estimated number of workers in 2010:	17,900
Projected Growth 2000-2010:	26.1%
Est. openings due to separations by 2008:	5,200
<i>These figures do not include self-employment.</i>	

Job opportunities should be better at small newspapers and electronic media outlets where pay tends to be lower. Competition for jobs, however, will continue to be keen.

Workers will also be needed to replace those who transfer, retire, or leave the labor force. The turnover rate is generally low.

Trends

Increasingly, computerized equipment has decreased the need for printers, and many of their responsibilities have been taken over by Editors such as layout and pagination. As they assume more of these responsibilities, the demand for Editors should increase. The adoption of computer software with editing capabilities does not necessarily mean a decrease in the time needed to correct news articles, nor does it suggest that fewer Editors will be needed in the future. Software can never completely replace human judgment. It does mean that Editors will need to keep their knowledge levels up-to-date as employers adopt new software.

It is still unclear what role the Internet will play in the future of publishing. It has been suggested that newspapers and magazines and even books would disappear, replaced by their counterparts on the Internet. That hasn't happened yet, and it now appears as though the advantages of paper – its low cost and portability – will ensure its survival in the foreseeable future. On-line versions of newspapers and magazines, though, have gained a seemingly permanent place on the Web. And “e-books”, electronic versions of the printed version, are slowly increasing in popularity. These changes will, if anything, lead to an increase in demand for Editors, since no matter how information is conveyed, it still must be checked for accuracy, grammar, and style.

WHAT DOES THE JOB PAY?

California Earnings

Editors 2002 Wages

Hourly wages range from	\$15.77 to \$28.99
Average hourly wage	\$23.96
Average annual wage	\$49,835

Source: *Occupational Employment Survey of Employers by EDD/LMID.*

Salaries for Editors vary considerably, depending upon previous experience and the size of the publication. Merit and longevity pay could raise the latter amount considerably. Smaller newspapers generally offer lower salaries than metropolitan dailies. Editors working at night may receive slightly higher wages.

Hours

A five-day, 40-hour workweek is standard in the industry. However, smaller newspapers may require fewer regular hours. Work in excess of the standard is usually compensated at one and one-half times the basic rate, although smaller papers are less likely to pay overtime rates. Overtime is infrequent, though major or last-minute news developments sometimes require extra work.

Hours for Editors may be more regular than hours of non-editing staff, although weekend work is not uncommon. Weekend work is either rotated among staff members or assigned on a permanent basis with compensating weekdays off.

Benefits

Benefits usually include health insurance, vacation, sick leave, holidays, and retirement benefits.

HOW DO I PREPARE FOR THE JOB?

Prior experience either in reporting or in editing is generally a prerequisite for Editors. Previous newspaper, radio, television, or magazine experience is preferred. Writing and editing experience on a high school or college newspaper is also advantageous.

Applicants for Editor jobs should have good concentration, be interested in a variety of subjects, and enjoy reading. They must have an excellent knowledge of grammar, punctuation, spelling, and word and sentence usage. Knowledge of proofreader symbols is helpful. Editors should be able to type.

Today's feature articles often probe deeply into a variety of technical and specialized subjects. This has created a strong demand, particularly on larger newspapers and specialized television broadcasters, for Editors who are familiar with scientific, engineering, economic, and business concepts and terminology.

Education and Training

Most employers desire at least some college training, preferably a four-year degree. Course

work in journalism, English, and writing is helpful, as are classes in the humanities and liberal arts. Advanced degrees in journalism are offered at some schools, although it is uncertain that an advanced degree would provide a competitive advantage in a job search.

Newspapers, magazines, and radio and television stations are increasing their presence on the Internet. Editors who wish to work in online publishing should be well trained in hardware and software used for establishing and maintaining a Web site. These may include HTML, photographic publishing software, and web-authoring software.

Licensing and Certification

Licensing is not required in this occupation.

Continuing Education

Editors may need to take courses, especially in computer-based editing systems, to stay current in their field and proficient in new software.

HOW DO I FIND THE JOB?

College placement offices can be used as a resource, as can journalism or English departments, professional associations, classified advertisements in specialized or general newspapers. Those who serve internships on newspapers while in school have the added advantage of meeting people in the field and hearing about job opportunities.

Direct application to employers remains one of the most effective job search methods. Private firms are listed in the yellow pages under Newspapers, Radio, and Television Broadcasters and Publishers. California job openings can be found at various online job-listing systems including CalJOBSSM at www.caljobs.ca.gov or at America's Job Bank at www.ajb.dni.us.

For other occupational and wage information and a listing of the largest employers in any county, visit the Employment Development Department Labor Market Information Web page at www.calmis.ca.gov. Find further job search

assistance from your nearest Job Service office www.edd.ca.gov/jsloc.htm or the closest One-Stop site listed on the California WorkNet site, www.sjtcc.ca.gov/sjtccweb/one-stop.

WHERE CAN THIS JOB LEAD?

Increasing familiarity with newspaper procedures and practices enables Editors to advance to editorial responsibilities in news, sports, or other subjects. A typical promotional pattern might include supervisor of the copy desk, Assistant Editor, Editor, and Executive Editor of a department.

OTHER SOURCES OF INFORMATION

The Newspaper Guild-CWA
501 Third Street NW, Suite 250
Washington, DC 20001
(202) 434-7177
www.newsguild.org

Newspaper Association of America
1921 Gallows Road, Suite 600
Vienna, VA 22182
(703) 902-1600
www.naa.org

Northern California Newspaper Guild
P.O. Box 5303
Galt, CA 95632
(209) 744-1974

American Copy Editor's Society
3 Healy Street
Huntington, NY 11743
www.copydesk.org

Employment Projections by Occupation
www.calmis.ca.gov/htmlfile/subject/occproj.htm

Employment and Wages by Occupation
[www.calmis.ca.gov/file/occup\\$/OES\\$.htm](http://www.calmis.ca.gov/file/occup$/OES$.htm)

RELATED OCCUPATIONAL GUIDES

Newspaper Reporters	No. 113
Technical Writers	No. 138



OCCUPATIONAL CODE REFERENCES

SOC <i>(Standard Occupational Classification)</i>		
Editors		27-3041
O*NET <i>(Occupational Information Network)</i>		
Editors		27-3041.00
OES <i>(Occupational Employment Statistics)</i>		
Writers and Editors		34002
DOT <i>(Dictionary of Occupational Titles)</i>		
Editor, News	132.067-026	
Editorial Assistant	132.267-014	